

**HOME AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS**

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY WRITTEN QUESTION ON NOTICE

Senate Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade References Committee

21 December 2022

QoN Number: 8

Subject: Iranian women and girls in Australia on temporary visas

Asked by: Claire Chandler

Question:

How many Iranian women and girls are currently in Australia on temporary visas?

a. If possible, please provide a breakdown by Visa type/category

Answer:

As at 21 December 2022, the following number of temporary visas were held by Iranian women and girls in Australia.

Visa Category	Visa Subclass	21/12/2022
Bridging	010 Bridging A	489
	020 Bridging B	173
	030 Bridging C	40
Other Temporary	590 Student Guardian	11
	602 Medical Treatment	<5
Student	500 Student	1,141
	Temporary Resident (Other Employment)	
	400 Temporary Work (Short Stay Activity)	<5
	407 Training	<5
	408 Temporary Activity	60
	461 New Zealand Citizen Family Relationship (Temporary)	12
	476 Skilled - Recognised Graduate	34
	485 Temporary Graduate	190
	870 Sponsored Parent (Temporary)	50
	995 Diplomatic (Temporary)	15
Temporary Resident (Skilled Employment)	457 Temporary Work (Skilled)	8
	482 Temporary Skill Shortage	279
Visitor	600 Visitor	2,906
Total (In Australia)		5,415

**HOME AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS**

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY WRITTEN QUESTION ON NOTICE

Senate Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade References Committee

21 December 2022

QoN Number: 7

Subject: Iranian Government members' visas or permits to travel to Australia

Asked by: Claire Chandler

Question:

Are you aware of any Iranian Government members of parliament or senior officials who have visas or permits which allow them to travel to Australia?

Answer:

As at 23 December 2022, 34 Iranian citizens hold a Diplomat (Subclass 995) visa to Australia.

In total, there are 7,099 Iranian citizens offshore who hold an Australian Temporary visa which allows the person to travel to and enter Australia. The Department is unable to report on their standing within the Iranian Government without a manual interrogation of each visa holder's individual record.

**HOME AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS**

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY WRITTEN QUESTION ON NOTICE

Senate Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade References Committee

21 December 2022

QoN Number: 6

Subject: Social media monitoring

Asked by: Claire Chandler

Question:

Has the Department investigated (or is the Department aware of any other branches of Government investigating) whether persons connected to the Iranian regime have set up social media pages or groups as a way to discover identities or track comments and statements made by those opposed to the regime?

Answer:

No.

**HOME AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS**

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY WRITTEN QUESTION ON NOTICE

Senate Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade References Committee

21 December 2022

QoN Number: 5

Subject: IRI Australian Investments or cash in Australia

Asked by: Claire Chandler

Question:

Does the Department know the extent to which senior IRI officials hold Australian investments or cash in Australian bank accounts?

- a. If not, is the Department aware whether any other agency or branch of Government holds this information?
- b. If people connected to the IRI regime hold assets or investments in Australia, were any of those people amongst those designated under Magnitsky-style sanctions earlier this month?

Answer:

Published data shows that foreign direct investment from Iran into Australia is negligible (see [Country Economic and Trade Data - Power BI Report Server \(dfat.gov.au\)](https://dfat.gov.au)).

Due to protected information provisions under the *Foreign Acquisitions and Takeovers Act 1975* (the Act), the Government cannot discuss specific foreign investment applications, or the application of foreign investment arrangements as they apply or could apply to particular cases. This is because the Act establishes that any information pertaining to an applicant's case is protected and can only be discussed with the applicant, unless an exemption under the Act applies.

The Government recognises that foreign investment must be in our national interest, and reviews all foreign investment proposals against the national interest on a case-by-case basis. If it is ultimately considered that a proposal is contrary to the national interest, it will not be approved, or conditions will be applied to safeguard the national interest. Further, the Government expects all investors (both foreign and domestically owned) to comply with Australia's laws and maintain high standards of conduct at all times. This includes following both the spirit and the letter of Australian

law, and acting in good faith in complying with any conditions imposed by the Government.

As part of their anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing (AML/CTF) program, banks and other reporting entities must have risk-based procedures in place to identify whether an individual customer or beneficial owner is a politically exposed person (PEP).

For the purposes of the AML/CTF Rules, a PEP is defined as an individual who holds a prominent public position or function in a government body or an international organisation, or who is an immediate family member or close associate of such a person.

Reporting entities must carry out customer identification and verification procedures to identify whether their customer is a PEP before providing them with a designated service, or as soon as possible afterwards. Reporting entities must also closely monitor the transactions of all high-risk PEPs, including foreign PEPs. If the bank suspects a transaction involves funds linked to corruption or other criminal activity, it must submit a suspicious matter report (SMR) to AUSTRAC. AUSTRAC cannot disclose details of such intelligence holdings relating to specific account-holders.

**HOME AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS**

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY WRITTEN QUESTION ON NOTICE

Senate Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade References Committee

21 December 2022

QoN Number: 4

Subject: Citizenship or residency rights of Iranian Information and Communication Technology Minister family members

Asked by: Claire Chandler

Question:

Do any members of the family of Iran's Information and Communications Technology Minister, Issa Zarepour, hold Australian citizenship or residency rights, as suggested by media reports? <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202209038632>

Answer:

For privacy reasons, the Department does not comment on individual cases.

**HOME AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS**

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY WRITTEN QUESTION ON NOTICE

Senate Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade References Committee

21 December 2022

QoN Number: 3

Subject: IRI Officials and families in Australia

Asked by: Claire Chandler

Question:

Does the Department know whether there are senior IRI officials, or the families of senior IRI officials, in Australia at the moment?

- a. If not, is the Department aware whether any other agency or branch of Government holds this information?
- b. To the Department's knowledge, have any attempts been made to obtain this information?

Answer:

Consistent with the response to Question on Notice Number 7, the Department of Home Affairs does not have routine access to data that shows visa applicants or visa holders by occupation. This includes primary visa applicants and their family members.

In addition, a number of temporary visas do not request occupations to be provided for a visa application.

The Department is unable to advise on any relevant information that may be held or known by other Australian Government agencies.

**HOME AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS**

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY SPOKEN QUESTION ON NOTICE

Senate Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade References Committee

21 December 2022

QoN Number: 2

Subject: Protection Visa Processing timeframes

Asked by: Jordon Steele-John

Question:

Senator STEELE-JOHN: At the moment, what is the expected time frame for the resolution of a lodgement that you are giving to people who have lodged?

Mr Kiley: Again, I wouldn't want to give any clear time frame within which a protection visa application would be considered, because it would depend on the individual circumstances of that matter. So it's not possible to give a very clear answer, but I'm happy to take on notice the average time for protection visa consideration over the last 12 months or so. I can take that on notice and get back to the committee.

Senator STEELE-JOHN: That would be useful; thank you.

Answer:

For the program year 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022, the average number of days for permanent protection visa processing from lodgment to primary decision was 841.

**HOME AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS**

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY SPOKEN QUESTION ON NOTICE

Senate Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade References Committee

21 December 2022

QoN Number: 1

Subject: IRI Officials with investments or cash in Australia

Asked by: Claire Chandler

Question:

CHAIR: Do you know the extent to which senior regime officials might hold Australian investments or cash in Australian bank accounts?

Mr Kiley: That wouldn't be for Home Affairs; that would be more a matter for other agencies. But we can take that on notice and try to direct that to the right agency.

CHAIR: I'd be interested to know which agency would have responsibility for that.

Mr Kiley: I'm looking at law enforcement. But AUSTRAC would probably be the most likely agency in relation to financial transactions.

Mr McIntyre: Indeed. Treasury would also play a part, with the Foreign Investment Review Board, if it's foreign investment. In terms of individuals and their financial affairs, then AUSTRAC would be best placed to provide that response.

CHAIR: In determining whether or not any of those individuals indeed had assets in Australia, it would just be interesting to know how that would interact with any of the Magnitsky-style sanctions that we applied earlier this month. Yes, if you could direct that question to the appropriate place, that would be appreciated.

Answer:

Published data shows that foreign direct investment from Iran into Australia is negligible (see [Country Economic and Trade Data - Power BI Report Server \(dfat.gov.au\)](#)).

Due to protected information provisions under the *Foreign Acquisitions and Takeovers Act 1975* (the Act), the Government cannot discuss specific foreign investment applications, or the application of foreign investment arrangements as they apply or could apply to particular cases. This is because the Act establishes that any information pertaining to an applicant's case is protected and can only be discussed with the applicant, unless an exemption under the Act applies.

The Government recognises that foreign investment must be in our national interest, and reviews all foreign investment proposals against the national interest on a case-by-case basis. If it is ultimately considered that a proposal is contrary to the national interest, it will not be approved, or conditions will be applied to safeguard the national interest. Further, the Government expects all investors (both foreign and domestically owned) to comply with Australia's laws and maintain high standards of conduct at all times. This includes following both the spirit and the letter of Australian law, and acting in good faith in complying with any conditions imposed by the Government.

As part of their anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing (AML/CTF) program, banks and other reporting entities must have risk-based procedures in place to identify whether an individual customer or beneficial owner is a politically exposed person (PEP).

For the purposes of the AML/CTF Rules, a PEP is defined as an individual who holds a prominent public position or function in a government body or an international organisation, or who is an immediate family member or close associate of such a person.

Reporting entities must carry out customer identification and verification procedures to identify whether their customer is a PEP before providing them with a designated service, or as soon as possible afterwards. Reporting entities must also closely monitor the transactions of all high-risk PEPs, including foreign PEPs. If the bank suspects a transaction involves funds linked to corruption or other criminal activity, it must submit a suspicious matter report (SMR) to AUSTRAC. AUSTRAC cannot disclose details of such intelligence holdings relating to specific account-holders.